

While there are many equations and calorie calculators out there, it is important to note that they are all ESTIMATES. Your calorie needs are as unique as your fingerprint and will vary from day-to-day and possibly meal-to-meal based on your level of activity, current metabolism, and hormone production. If you want to know how many calories you need, you must first put on your sleuth hat and calculate how many calories you typically eat. Keep a food diary on ChooseMyPlate.gov or MyFitnessPal for 7-14 days to find your average daily intake of calories. Compare this to your estimated energy requirements from the Institute of Medicine’s equation below:

Sex	Estimated Energy Requirements (kcal/d)	Physical Activity (PA) Coefficients
Male	$662 - 9.53A + [PA \times (15.9W + 540H)]$	1.11 for Low Active 1.25 for Active 1.48 for Very Active
Female	$354 - 6.91A + [PA \times (9.36W + 726H)]$	1.12 for Low Active 1.27 for Active 1.45 for Very Active

A = Age (y); W = weight (kg); H = height (m)

Low Active = sitting most of the day and walking to perform tasks of daily living

Active = Athlete who exercises about 1 hour per day

Very Active = Athlete engaging in several hours of vigorous exercise training per day

Kg = weight in pounds / 2.2

m = height in inches / 39.37

If your goal is to change your weight, see the *Stronger & Thicker Nutrition Handbook* (for hard gainers) or the *Toned & Healthy Nutrition Handbook* (for weight loss) because increasing or decreasing your caloric intake alone may not do the trick.

Endurance athletes who are training or competing for more than two or three hours a day need more calories than an athlete in the “very active” category. If you’re properly fueling with 90 grams of carbs per hour during a training session or event, then your calorie needs should be met. We would love to discuss specific needs with you in the forum or online chat.